

U.S.S. SEA ROBIN (SS407)

c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, Calif.

U.S.S. SEA ROBIN – Report of First War Patrol.

(A) PROLOGUE

Commissioned at Portsmouth, N.H. on 7 August 1944. 22 August to 16 September, conducted sea trials, made training dives, and deep dive. 17 September departed Portsmouth, N.H., and arrived Newport, R.I. 18-20 September fired contract torpedo trails. 20 September departed Newport and arrived New London, Ct. 20 September to 3 October conducted intensive training. 3 October departed New London, Ct., enroute Balboa, C.Z. 12 October arrived Balboa, C.Z. 13-21 October in Panama area conducting approaches, making training dives, exercising at battle surface, etc. Fired 20 mark 23 exercise torpedoes. Panama training was excellent

21 October to 5 November enroute Panama to Pearl Harbor. Assigned to Submarine Division 46 for training. Underwent five day retrofit by Submarine Base during which installation of VHF, APR, booster blower for ventilation forward, DCDI, 2 40mm guns and attendant stowage was accomplished. During the training period fired 6 mark 14 exercise torpedoes. Fired 5" gun and 40mm guns and .50 calibers several times at stationary target off Barbors Point.

Experimental model, ST radar, was installed during our training period at Portsmouth, N.H. Mark I Mod I Submarine DRT was given to us at New London, Ct., and installed at Panama.

Readiness for sea date, 26 November 1944.

(B) NARRATIVE

November 26, 1944.

1300(VW) Departed Pearl Harbor in company with Guardfish, and PC escort. Sea Robin, Guardfish and Sea Dog organized as a coordinated attack group. Task group designation 17.14. CTG 17.14 in Sea Dog. This unit is designated 17.14.3. Will rendezvous with Sea Dog 400 miles southwest of Midway.

1415(VW) Made battle surface firing pass at stationary target off Barbors Point.

1515(VW) Set course for rendezvous. Took station 5 miles north of Guardfish.

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November 26 – December 1.

Enroute rendezvous. Held communication drills with Guardfish; held radar tracking drills and made submerged approaches daily on Guardfish. Made many training dives and exercised at emergency drills.

December 1.

1430(M) Rendezvous with Sea Dog. Guardfish transferred Op-Ord to Sea Dog.

1545(M) Set course for Saipan. Took station 10 miles on Sea Dog's port beam.

December 1 – 8.

Enroute Saipan. General training enroute.

December 8.

0530(K) Made rendezvous with escort. Proceeding to Saipan, zigging radically at 4 engine speed because of known presence of enemy subs.

0622(K) Escort declared he had sound contact in our vicinity. Reversed course at full power. Escort was unable to re-establish contact. Continued to Saipan.

1015(K) Entered Tanapag Harbor and moored in nest alongside Fulton. Commenced minor voyage repairs. Personnel from tender were exceptionally cooperative.

December 9.

0930(K) Underway enroute patrol area.

1100(K) Took station 10 miles on Sea Dog's port beam.

1358(K) Sighted Liberator and exchanged recognition signals. (A/C #1).

December 11. (From here on all times (I) unless other wise specified).

0934 Sighted Betty on port quarter. Dived. SJ radar contact made at 9600 yds. Was not using SD and no APR contact was made. (A/C #2).

0954 Surfaced, all clear. Made weak APR contact at irregular intervals on 150 m.c.

1050 Sighted unidentified 4 land based plane on starboard bow. Dived. Prior to sighting made APR contact at 530 m.c., 350 p.p.s. Believe this was a U.S. plane but didn't identify him as the sky was extremely cloudy (A/C #3).

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December 11 (Con'd)

1106 Surfaced. All clear by sight and APR.

2207 SJ radar contact at 4400 yds. On starboard bow. Reversed course and put target on our quarter. No radar interference of any kind although closed to 3100 yds. Before range started to open. Tracked target on course 115° T, speed 14. Could this be the Razorback or Tre pang? Pip was small and no SJ interference coming from it. Definitely decided it was a sub, but whose's sub? Informed Wolf Pack Commander we were tracking unidentified target on course 115° T, speed 14. (S/C#1).

2245 Message from Guardfish stating our contact might be on her, as target's position sent out by us was very close to Guardfish's position. Know this target could not be Guardfish because target was headed East and Guardfish was headed West. Tried to raise Razorback and Tre pang on Wolf Pack frequency, 2880 kcs, and 4155 kcs. No results.

December 12.

0056 Still tracking target, same course, same speed. This is a very helpless feeling. If he is a friendly and we wait until daybreak to find out, we will be day into reaching area. We think he is friendly, but lack of radar indicated he may be Jap. If he is Jap and we challenge, he will dive and we will be unable to identify him as such at dawn and torpedo him. Decided to challenge target because we were 80 miles behind our pack and would be 300 miles behind if we wait until daylight. Definitely decided target must be Razorback or a U.S. submarine headed for Saipan with radar out of commission.

0058 Challenged target. Forty seconds later receive correct reply. It was U.S.S. Jack. She informed us that her radar was out of commission. We informed her that we had been tracking her for 3 hours.

0119 Port vent motor to main motor out of commission. Headed for rest of pack at one shaft speed, 12.5 knots. Commenced working on vent motor. Necessary to replace armature because solder between commutator bars melted. (See Major Defects).

December 13.

Still making one shaft speed, 13.5 knots

0850 Vent motor for port main motor back in commission. It took about 32 hours to repair vent motor. See Major defects for details. Changed speed to four engine speed in order to comply with Pack Commander's order to take station 12 miles south of Balintang Island by 0500(I) on the 14th. Can make it if we can average 16.8 knots. Seas are on our starboard quarter and we will make it if not forced down.

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December 14.

0435 Radar contact on Babuyan Island 270° T, 60,000 yds.

Obtained fix and set course for 12 miles south of Balintang Island.

0520 Radar contact on Balintang Island, bearing 310° T, 27,000yds.

0554 Dived on station and patrolled area south of Balintang.

1510 Heard first of several very distant depth charges.

1602 Heard very weak pinging bearing 310° T. Depth charging continued – must be at least 20 or 30 miles away. I also estimate the pinging must be 15 miles away as it was extremely weak and we soon lost it.

1700 Changed zone description to minus eight time. All times from here on are (H), unless otherwise specified.

1910 Surfaced and set course 270° T to tomorrow's pre-arranged patrol area. Picked up SJ interference throughout the night.

December 15.

0330 Exchanged recognition signals with a friendly submarine, probably Sea Dog.

0534 Dived on station. Patrolled all day at periscope depth in a number one sea – visibility unlimited. Uneventful.

1850 Surfaced

2230 Received orders from Pack Commander to patrol shipping lane – Philippine Sea to Formosa Strait. Set course 270° T at four engine speed.

December 16.

0000 State of sea increased to four, wind 20 knots, both from 050° T. Must remain on surface until 0800 to reach station.

0627 Sighted floating spherical mine 300 yds. on starboard bow. (Mine contact #1).

Posit: Lat. 19-52.8° N, Long. 117-00.5° E. Mine was very rusty and had numerous horns. About 3 feet in diameter. Sat very high in the water. Did not reverse course to sink it because sea state had increased to six, and we were in a hurry to reach station by 0800.

No fix this morning or last night because of heavy overcast.

0759 Dived. Effective periscope depth patrolling impossible.

0928 Surfaced in number six sea, wind 40 to 50 knots. Remained on surface remainder of day, patrolling, and fixing ship's position with a series of sunlines. No contacts.

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December 17.

Seas and wind are still very strong.

0602 Dived. Periscope depth control impossible.

1322 Surfaced and made surface patrol remainder of the day; seas still state six and wind about 40 knots. Beat way to eastward at 8 knots to rejoin pack.

December 18

0629 Dived into a heavy sea.

1355 Surfaced. Beat way to eastward into a heavy sea.

December 19

0200 Upon orders of Pack Commander changed course to 240° T, to patrol on Scouting Line across South China Sea – Formosa Strait Trade Lane.

0615 Dived. Seas reduced to state 4.5

1740 Surfaced. Seas extremely heavy and wind about 40 knots, both from 240° T.

2135 Picked up radar interference to southeast. Challenged and exchanged recognition signals with the Segundo.

December 20

0105 Picked up radar interference to southeast. Challenged and exchanged recognition signals with the Sealion.

0616 Dived.

1306 Surfaced and conducted surface patrol, Seas #6, wind 40 knots.

December 21

0030 Radar contact 5700 yds., either Sealion or Segundo.

0417 Received message from Pack Commander to patrol special area in 11 Destroy. Changed course to 330° T.

0638 Dived for trim.

0830 Surfaced.

December 22

0630 Dived

0907 Surfaced. Seas have abated; state # 2. Conducting surface patrol. At

2305 Sea had abated to number one. Decided to take advantage of this good weather to convert # 4 FBT to a main ballast tank to improve the sea worthiness of the boat since we had been taking a beating in the heavy seas caused by the N.E. monsoons.

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December 22 (Cont)

Slowed to 8 knots and headed into slight swell. There were no white caps. Sent three auxiliarmen on deck with proper tools and wearing life belts. Two auxiliarmen were in the superstructure and one was tending them on deck. Commanding Officer, Navigator, as well as Officer of the deck, were on the bridge and a quartermaster was stationed aft on cigarette deck to watch men working on deck. At 2325 Received freak cross sea which swept across aft deck, about one foot deep. Quartermaster saw man go overboard to port. Man was lying flat on deck when he went over the side and it is believed that he was injured by striking his head on 5" gun or deck. He made no outcry and did not struggle. Immediately went to man-over-board stations, cut in Dead Reckoning Tracer (DRT), and maneuvered ship to recover man. Man lost was GRIFFIN, Thomas Wilson, 842-34-29, MoMM2c, V-6, USNR. GRIFFIN was an excellent swimmer and had life belt. Put eight lookouts on watch and with alternate calling and listening and use of DRT searched area for seven hours during darkness. A two mile square area about the point was searched.

December 23. At

0401 Contacted Guardfish by SJ radar. She informed us she would assist with our search. At daylight she joined us for a coordinated search. With her help and use of DRT searched during next six hour period a ten square mile area about the point GRIFFIN was lost overboard. No results. The search was given up as hopeless at 1115 as the man was not on the surface of the water. It is believed that he was injured and sank immediately after going over the side. Position was Lat. 20-16.0° N, Long. 114-56.0° E.

0837 Guardfish dived.

0850 Dived. Had APR contact 145 m.c. (A/C #4).

0856 Exchanged signals with Guardfish by QC. She informed us she had SD contact 8 miles.

0914 Surfaced and resumed search.

1057 Lookout sighted Mavis on port beam, 6 miles. (A/C #5). Dived.

1110 Notified Guardfish, "Search completed". At

1334 Surfaced and set westerly course.

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December 24

0625 Port lookout sighted 4 unidentified ships bearing 192° T. (S/C #2). SJ radar could not pick them up, but they looked large and looked like they had a zero angle on the bow. Since out SJ had been giving us some trouble we thought it was out of commission. Only 45 minutes to sunrise, so at

0632 Dived for submerged approach.

0700 Came up to SD radar mast depth and sent contact report to wolves 1 and 2. Did not get a receipt from either one.

0755 Ships identified as 4 large sailing junks. Secured from Battle Stations.

0758 Back to SD radar mast depth, and sent cancellation of contact report. No receipt.

1016 When junks were clear, surfaced. Junks bore 210° T, distance about 10 miles. Their course 210° T. Run to southward to get ahead of junks to look over their armament. At

1240 Sighted floating mine. (Mine contact #2). Lat. 19-30° N, Long. 113-07.5° E. As junks sails were plainly visible on horizon did not stop to shoot at mine. At

1252 Submerged ahead of junks. At

1300 Depth 30 fathoms. At

1310 Depth 10 fathoms. At

1311 Depth 3 fathoms. At

1312 Depth 2 fathoms. "Surfaced". Cleared area and at

1328 Dived. Waiting for junks. Did not appear so at the westward. Began end around. At

1752 Dived ahead of junks. Ran toward them at standard speed submerged. At

1845 Surfaced. It is too dark to see more than 100 yds. through the periscope. At

1925 Got pips on two of the junks at range of 4000 and 5000 yds. Too dark to see them. Started tracking. They had reversed course to the north! This looks very suspicious. Since the armament of these vessels was not known and because of darkness it was impossible to see through the gun sights, it was decided not to attack them.

December 25. Merry Christmas

0000 Exchanged recognition signals with Guardfish.

0631 Dived.

1707 Surfaced.

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December 26

0020 Exchanged recognition signals with Sea Dog by SJ.

0636 Dived

0900 Surfaced. Seas are building up to state 4.

1304 Sighted Betty coming out of the clouds on port bow. SJ radar got a pip at 9500 yds. Dived (A/C #6).

1610 Surfaced.

1637 Sighted Mavis on starboard beam, distance 8 miles. Dived. (A/C #7).

1649 Surfaced. All clear. Set course to close Hainan Island.

December 27

0230 Received message from China reporting a south bound convoy north of Hainan and a north bound convoy south of Hainan.

0530 Picked up land by SJ radar 282 T, distance 20 miles.

0554 Called away tracking party because of three new pips on radar. Tracked and the speed was zero. Turned out to be False Tinhosa Island and surrounding islands.

0645 Dived 15 miles east of Tinhosa Island. At

0825 Picked up echo ranging bearing 270° T in direction of Tinhosa Island. Changed course towards pinging, and when it was found the bearing were drawing to northwards came to the normal approach course. Visibility very poor, heavy clouds and rain squalls. At

0846 Sighted AK and DE escort. (S/C #3). Range 8000 yds. with angle on bow of 120° starboard. DE was at 6000 yds range with angle on bow of 25° starboard. Hung on waiting for a zig in our direction. At

0855 Soundman reported DE had contact. Raised periscope and found DE at range of 3000 yards, angle on bow zero, with a big bow wave – with a second escort, angle on bow 90° starboard, swinging rapidly to starboard in our direction. Went to 200 feet (fathometer reading one hour before gave 36 fathoms) and rigged for depth charge.

Evaded by fish-tailing at 70 RPM. Although escorts raced back and forth for an hour, with both of them echo ranging, they seemed unable to reestablish contact. At

0956 With echo ranging getting weaker and screws heard very faintly, came to periscope depth. Nothing in sight except rain squall close aboard. At

1018 Sighted escort at about 10,000 yards in direction of convoy which had disappeared, but he was soon lost from view. Since convoy was in shallow water to the north of Tinhosa Island, decide to close coast and wait for southbound convoy reported by Chunkink. At

1804 Surfaced. The southbound convoy must have gone through Hainan Strait.

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December 28

0635 Dived 9 miles to east of Tinhosa Island in hopes of intercepting convoy reported by China planes.

1230 Surfaced 15 miles off Tinhosa Island and made several SJ radar sweeps. Fixed our position. Definitely no shipping along the Hainan coast so far today. Seas are fairly heavy.

1312 Dived to continue submerged patrol.

1445 Surfaced 12 miles off Hainan Coast. Commenced surface patrol to eastward in hopes that reported convoy might be trying to ease up to Hong Kong via a route several miles off the Hainan Coast.

1743 Sighted a spherical mine. (Mine contact #3). Posit: Lat. 18-40.2° N, Long. 110-50.2° E. Circled and attempted to sink it with carbine fire. Mine was hit several times at ranges of 150 to 250 yards. Bullets seemed to glance off, and none of the shots hit the conical horns. Abandoned attempt incident to darkness.

1900 Exchanged recognition signals with SJ radar with Sea Dog. Sent Sea Dog our position and informed her that we believed all shipping was hugging the coast. Although the reported convoy was not sighted today. Patrolled area to eastward of Hainan Island during the night.

December 29

0647 Dive 10 miles southeast of Tinhosa Island

1517 Surfaced

1849 Transmitted message to NKN in accordance with ComSubPac instructions. Changed course to eastward to shift areas.

December 30

0631 Dived for trim

0804 Surfaced.

0930 APR contact 140 m.c.; dived (A/C #8)

1009 Surfaced; all clear.

1230 Received message from Pack Commander to change course to 240° T, speed 18. Changed course to 240° T, speed 18, and wondered what the dope was. Guardfish did not get the message. At about

1400 Sea Dog informed us that China reported that a 20 ship convoy was beating to the southward along Hainan. Set course to intercept.

1905 Changed course to 270° T to intercept convoy south of Hainan – between Hainan and Tourane.

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December 30 (Con't)

2120 APR contact; dived.

2137 Surfaced; APR contact, 195 m.c. It was an air search radar, hand trained, located at Yulinkan Bay, Jap naval air base on southern Hainan. See paragraph on radar for details on this set. When naval base bore 350° T, distance 17 miles changed course to north to sweep up the coast. No contacts.

2200 Picked up strong 10 cm radar interference on SJ radar (not SJ) which came from direction of Yulinkan Bay. Appeared to be a powerful set (See paragraph U).

2343 APR contact 155 m.c. Dived (A/C #9).

December 31

0007 Surfaced and continued sweep up the east coast of Hainan.

0010 Exchanged recognition and messages with Sea Dog giving her the area and results of our search. Sea Dog's search was negative. She ordered us to patrol area eastward of Hainan after we completed our search for convoy. Continued search up east coast of Hainan.

0641 Dived 10 miles of Tinhosa Island for submerged patrol.

1810 Surfaced and spent New Years Eve on surface patrol with no contacts. Ordered by Sea Dog to patrol same area tomorrow.

January 1

0625 Dived for submerged patrol 10 miles east of Tinhosa Island off coast of Hainan.

1758 Surfaced. Patrolled on 090° T along 18 – 30' (N) until midnite.

January 2

0015 APR contact, rather weak, 175 m.c. (A/C #10).

0020 APR contact getting weaker suddenly picked up plane on SJ radar at 11,000 yds. coming in, so dived. His pip on APR definitely got much weaker but SJ showed him coming in fast. He must have decreased his power as he came in.

0049 Came up to APR depth, all clear. Surfaced. Changed course to 270° T, to close coast.

0315 Dived, 10 miles east of Tinhosa Island

0732 Echo ranging bearing 015° T. Changed course to 015° T and went to battle stations.

0748 Sighted smoke bearing 015° T. (S/C #4). At

0754 Sighted ship angle on the bow 15° port, so changed course to 300° T. At

0801 Sighted three or four ships, with a 20° starboard angle on the bow. Changed course to 030° T. At

0806 Angle on the bow was again port so came around to 280° T.

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January 2 (Con't)

Formation consisted of a DE leading with two unidentified AK's in column astern. Range still about 8000yds. At

0816 Changed course to 300° T. Tried to get an ST radar range, but with no results. On the observation between 0806 and 0816 the convoy was seen only once or twice incident to rain squalls. During this time it was found that convoy consisted of three AK's escorted by a DE. JP picked up their screws, but neither QB not JK could hear anything except pinging by DE. On our last observation we were closing the track rapidly. At

0835 Rain squalls completely blotted out the targets and they were never seen again. Their sound bearing no longer drew to the southward and screws and pinging gradually became weaker. They had zigged 90° away from us and headed in towards Tinhosa Island. It is believed they anchored in against the Hainan Coast in shallow water. During the period the targets were lost in rain squalls, repeated attempts were made to obtain SJ radar ranges but to no avail, although we could pick up Tinhosa Island at 15,000 yds, At

0842 We could hear weak pinging bearing 264° T. At

0850 Came up to 50 ft. All we could pick up was Tinhosa Island. At

0858 Came up to 40 feet and swept with SJ. No ship contacts. It was now definite that the convoy had put in toward the coast of Hainan. At

0904 Surfaced and ran south to get ahead of them and to sweep the coast with radar to see if they were trying to hug the coast. Sent report of contact to rest of wolf pack but could raise only the Sea Dog who receipted for the message. Copied Chunking schedule, but there was nothing for us. Visibility picked up and one of the lookouts thought he saw mast against Tinhosa Island, but closer inspection revealed them to be on the Island. Ran to the south and then closed Hainan to ten miles. Nothing sighted. Turned northward to sweep the coast toward Tinhosa Island. At

1055 Dived for APR contact 155 m.c. (A/C # 11).

1158 Surfaced and closed Tinhosa Island to 11 miles. Ships are definitely not proceeding south along coast. They must have anchored in behind Tinhosa Island. Water around and behind Tinhosa Island varies from 20 to 6 fathoms with water over 40 fathoms ten miles away so cannot attack convoy at anchorage. At no time was the visibility good enough to identify any ships except to determine that the escort was a DE and the others were freighters.

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January 2 (Con't)

1215 Dived to blockade Tinhosa from the south and east. This episode was very discouraging for it looked like we were going to get an attack in for certain. The "Early Bird" is having a hard time finding a nest to lay her first batch of eggs.

1900 Surfaced. All clear.

January 3

Patrolling off Leung Sui Point during the night blockading convoy at Tinhosa.

0500 Picked up radar interference from direction of Tinhosa anchorage on SJ radar screen (10 cm interference, not SJ). Coached soundman on bearings, 300° T, and he picked up pinging. (S/C #5). Picked up four contacts on radar in direction of pinging. very close to the beach. Range 22,000 yards. It appears as if our targets were anchored at Tinhosa yesterday, were getting underway and heading south. At

0609 Picked up SJ radar interference from the southeast. Exchanged recognition and calls – it was Kraken. Sent contact report to her of our convoy by SJ. At

0628 APR contact, 155 m.c. (A/C #12). At

0642 Dived off Gaalong Point, which bore 315° T, distance 9 miles. Convoy did not pass between us and land. It appears as if they may have taken departure from land on a southerly or southeasterly course. At

0912 Surfaced and set course 150°T, speed 17 to make retiring search to the south and southeast. No contact during search. At

1300 Sent weather report to ComSubPac and since we already disclosed our position sent a message to Chungking.

January 4

0635 Dived for submerged patrol off Tinhosa Island.

0900 Sighted Betty headed in toward Tinhosa at a range of 4 miles. (A/C # 13).

1750 Surfaced

January 5,

0628 Dived for submerged patrol off Tinhosa Island.

1238 Sighted ship bearing 280° T. distant 11,000 yards., angle on the bow 60 starboard, coming out from behind Tinhosa Island. (S/C #6). Went to battle stations submerged and commenced approach.

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January 5 (Con't)

1247 Convoy in sight now, 1 DE, 1 AP and 2 AK's. Course 030° T, speed 9. Angle on the bow never less than 60° starboard except for DE. Minimum range 12,000 yards. Ships were close to the coast and in shallow water.

1320 Sighted Patrol plane which was air escort. (A/C #14).

1335 Range of convoy opening so changed course to 090° T to get clear enough to surface and ???.

1453 Surfaced and commenced end around at 17 knots. Sent contact report to Sea Dog.

1715 Received message from Sea Dog. She informed us she would attempt interception of our convoy north of Tonkon Point. At

1900 Arrived 10 miles off Tonkon Point, No sign of convoy. Patrolled that vicinity. At

1946 APR contact 175 m.c. coming in strong. Dived. (A/C # 15). At

2000 Came up to APR depth. Strong APR contact, 175 m.c.

2015 Came up to APR depth. Strong APR contact.

2030 Came up to APR depth. Strong APR contact. He certainly is giving our area a good going over.

2045 Came up to APR depth. No contact. Surfaced. Convoy should have been here by now.

2135 Picked up SJ interference. Exchanged recognition signals with Sea Dog and informed her that convoy had not yet reached Tonkon Point, and that it probably had stopped at a port enroute. At

2340 Radar contact bearing 160° T distant 14,000 yards. (S/C # 7). At

2345 Picked up 4 or five ships on radar on same bearing. Sent contact report to Sea Dog. Tracked convoy. Course 047 T, speed 7.

January 6

0015 Pack commander informed us he would take starboard flank. At

0030 Sea Dog sent message stating that rear target was SC and asked if leading targets were worth shooting at. Sent back affirmative. At

0056 Sea Dog sent, "Attack when in position". At

0056 With target course and speed checking on 040° T and 7 knots, started surface attack on leading target and her escort. At

0105 Began firing MK 18 torpedoes forward. Fired three at leading target at range of 3,000 yards with 104° port track and 347° gyro. At

0106 Fired three torpedoes at escort which was overlapping leading target at a range of 2535 yards. At

0108:45 Saw explosion against target from bridge which consisted of a large flash and a column of smoke and water which hid target from view. This explosion was heard throughout the boat. Nine seconds later there was a second explosion. This target is believed

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January 6 (Con't)

Too be 6,000 ton AP which was loading convoy when it was sighted yesterday. Got set up on second target in column for stern tube shot but line of bearing of targets was such that range was too great. Pulled out while Sea Dog made attack. All torpedoes fired were set on depth of five feet. It is believed that number four and five which were fired at overlapping escort ran under escort and hit main target. Tracking target and reloading torpedoes. At

0120 Escort went alongside damaged vessel. At

0133 Sea Dog started attack. At

0143 Sea Dog sent message to Sea Robin to attack immediately. At

0150 Started surface attack on target on port quarter of convoy.

This ship had become separated from convoy by several thousand yards. At

0212 Fired three bow Mark 18 torpedoes at small AK at a range of 2,700 yards, torpedo run of 2520, with a track 84° port and a gyro 006. Swung ship to bring stern tubes to bear and waited for him to blow up. It was impossible to miss with a spread of 450 feet which would give a speed coverage of from 2.6 to 10.6 kts. We had him clocked at 6.6 knots. These torpedoes were set at 4 feet depth.

0218 No explosions yet. Fired three Mark 23 torpedoes from stern tubes at a range of 3200 yds, spread 450 feet, with 120° port track and ten right gyro. No explosions. The only explanation I can give for this is that it must have been flat bottomed and the fish ran under target. Ten minutes later setup was still checking with plot and TDC, using radar ranges and TBT bearings.

0221 Sent attack completed to Sea Dog.

0251 Received message to attack at discretion from Sea Dog, and that she had attacked escort and that escort had returned compliments with gun fire and was perusing Sea Dog to the eastward. By this time convoy was well scattered with all targets well to the southward except last target at which we had fired torpedoes.

0310 Started in for torpedo attack on this AK with torpedoes set on 0 depth. At this time picked up pip of escort who had joined our target since last attack. At a range of 5000 yards escort turned toward us started closing range rapidly. Reversed course and put escort astern. Incident to moonrise visibility had increased until we could see bow wave but not hull of escort at 5000 yards. Gradually opened range and at 8000 yards escort gave up chase.

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January 6 (Con't)

0325 Changed course to northwest to run around escort and attack target. When range to target was 8000 yds., we picked up two more escorts at a range of 5000 yds. between us and the target., and coming in fast. Do not know where these two new escorts came from but they must have been reinforcements from Hainan Strait area. We were now boxed off completely from target. The original escort at this time also picked us up and joined the fracas. We had one bearing 269° T at 6000 yds, one at 310° T range 5000 yds, and one at 000° T at a range of 5600 yds. All closing. Reversed course at full speed and retired graciously to the southeast. We soon out ran escorts and lost them turning to the south. Further search failed to reveal balance of convoy to the south so at.

0620 Dived for submerged patrol and to rest officers and crew. At

1759 Surfaced and made surface patrol to the northeastern part of the area.

2235 APR contact at 115 m.c. Believed to be SD of Sea Dog.

January 7

0720 Dived. At

1250 Surfaced for surface patrol. At

1329 Sighted Betty and dived. (A/C #16). At

1518 Surfaced. At

1525 Sighted several sailing craft bearing 090° T on a southwesterly course. (S/C #8).

1530 Started end-around to look over these vessels.

1719 Dived ahead of sailing vessels and closed targets submerged. Became too dark to see targets so surfaced and proceeded to southwest ahead of targets. Gunner's mates and Auxiliaries spent the night manufacturing a new seat for the 5" gun. Heavy seas had carried away the trainer's seat. Was unable to locate targets.

January 8

1204 Dived for trim. At

1300 Surfaced. At

1439 Sighted floating spherical mine. (Mine contact #4). Lat. 19-25 N, Long. 111-35 E. At

1505 Sank mine with .50 cal. Machine gun fire. At

1932 Radar contact range 5600 yards bearing 047° T. Avoided when it was identified as Sugar Charlie type patrol craft. Do not believe he sighted us. (S/C #9).

U.S.S. SEA ROBIN (SS407)

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San Francisco, Calif.

January 8 (Con't)

Made surface patrol during night from Tonkon Point to Tinhosa Island along coast of Hainan.

January 9 American Forces landed at Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, P.I. At

0230 Received message from Chunking informing us plane would patrol between Tourane (*now Da Nang*) and Hong Kong every six hours. Shifted RBO to radio room to permit standing continuous watches on NPM plane frequency, and wolf pack frequency. See paragraph on radio concerning these arrangements. At

0655 Dived for trim. At

0811 Surfaced and conducted surface patrol along trade lanes from Indo-China to Hong Kong. At

1930 Received dispatch from ComSubPac changing our area to a joint zone. During the night closed Tonkon Point and patrolled to the southwestward along the Hainan coast.

January 10

0630 Dived for trim. At

0800 Sighted B-24 passing overhead. (A/C #17).

0805 Surfaced for surface patrol to the eastward of Hainan.

0843 Sighted unidentified plane bearing 280° T, distance 8 miles. (A/C #8). Dived. At

0940 Surfaced and continued patrol. At

1331 Sighted plane at 6 miles. (A/C #19). Dived. Believe this was B-24 search plane from China. At

1356 Surfaced to continue patrol.

January 11

0050 APR contact 175 m.c. weak.

0104 APR contact 175 m.c strong. Dived (A/C #20).

0125 APR Surfaced

0715 Sighted large oil slick 3 by 4 miles. Sighted debris as follows throughout the morning.

1. Wrecked lifeboat, capsized.
2. Wood hatch covers, with Jap markings.
3. Large mahogany desk.
4. Book case.
5. Thousands of soy beans or some grain similar to soy beans.
6. Bamboo poles.
7. Hundreds of pieces of cabinet wood. Several timbers.

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January 11 (Con't)

1050 Attempted to recover large mahogany desk to inspect drawers for papers. The location of debris and oil slick checked accurately with the location of the ship torpedoed by us on January 6, considering set and drift or current which we had experienced. In view of this it is believed that the ship attacked by Sea Robin was sunk.

1102 APR contact, 115 m.c., strong. (A/C # 210). Appeared to be lobe switching. Visibility was low. Dived.

1305 Surfaced, attempted to relocate desk, but was unsuccessful because of number four sea.

January 12

0627 Dived for trim.

0950 Surfaced and conducted surface patrol.

1510 APR contact 152 m.c. (A/C # 22). Dived.

1710 Surfaced.

January 13

0245 Received message from China search plane that a convoy of 11 unidentified ships were at Lat. 19-4? N, Long. 112-11 E, either on course 040°T, or 220° T. Took course and speed to intercept in case they were on 220°T. At time of receipt of this message we were proceeding to our lifeguard station. Decided to arrive at lifeguard station 2 or 3 hours after dawn in order to get a crack at reported convoy.

0530 Convoy must have been on 040° T or changed course. Perhaps they changed course because contact was sent in plain language, authenticated from the 1270 series.

0603 APR contact 120 m.c. at same instant SJ gave a contact at 6000 yds. At first thought it was a plane, so we dived. After a quick conference, decided it must be a sub's SD, keyed. Boarfish was soon due to pass thru this area.

0635 JP, QB, QC picked up screws. (S/C # 10).

0640 Sighted friendly submarine.

0645 Surfaced and exchanged signals. USS Boarfish. Gave her dope about reported convoy and then set course at four engine speed to lifeguard station.

1249 Sighted unidentified plane, range 6 miles. (A/C # 23). Made surface patrol all day near lifeguard station.

U.S.S. SEA ROBIN (SS407)

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January 14

Received message from ComSubPac that carrier attacks would last another day or so in the Indo-China vicinity. Also for us to patrol near lifeguard station.

0636 Dive for trim.

0908 Surfaced.

1022 Sighted Betty at six miles. Dived. (A/C # 24).

1025 At periscope depth, Betty circling in our c vicinity. Believe that Betty spotted us. Decided to let her burn up some g fuel.

1210 Received message informing us we would refit in Fremantle, and to pass to OpControl Task Force 71 at 1200 Z 16 January.

January 15

0625 Dived for trim.

0901 Surfaced

1040 Received message from NKN stating that a two stack AK was near eastern edge of our area at 0700(H) on course 065° T, speed 15. (That course made her head into air-surface zone). Set course at four engine speed to intercept in case AK was making slower speed.

1240 Slowed to one engine speed to return to area. No contact.

1408 Sighted plane at 4 miles. (A/C # 25). Dived.

1515 Surfaced

1600 Informed by ComSubPac to be on lifeguard station tomorrow.

1830 Sent weather report to ComSubPac.

January 16

0620 Dived for trim.

0645 Surfaced and patrolled on lifeguard station.

0937 Sighted two flights of four planes each. Cut in SD; contact at 20 miles, showing IFF. Sighted many friendly planes throughout the day. Had SD contact on many flights which were never sighted but showed IFF,

1400 Informed by planes that there was no business for us.

2000 Commenced guarding Radio Perth (VIXO). Set course for Fremantle.

U.S.S. SEA ROBIN (SS407)

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January 17-18

Enroute Fremantle.

January 19

0654 Dived

0726 Surfaced.

1327 Sighted North Natuna Islands.

2030 Converted #3 and #5 FBT to MBT.

2330 Dived to wash out FBT's.

January 20

0018 Surfaced.

0514 Picked up Tambelan Islands on radar.

0833 Submerged with Badas Islands ten miles to the south.

1400 Held "Crossing the Line" ceremonies.

1836 Surfaced.

2018 Dived under the Equator.

2021 Surfaced

January 21

0500 Began transit of Karimata Strait.

0625 Dived.

1905 Surfaced.

January 22

0345 Picked up SJ interference from a northbound sub.

0620 Dived for trim.

0635 Surfaced.

0900 Dived for planes.

1003 Surfaced.

1330 Sighted Bawean Island.

January 23

0430 Picked up Kangean Island on radar at 60,000 yds.

0608 Dived to patrol off Kangean Island. Numerous native fishing boats were seen throughout the day.

1408 Sighted a patrolling DAVE thru the periscope.

1914 Surfaced and headed for Lombok Strait.

U.S.S. SEA ROBIN (SS407)

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January 24

0012 Exchanged challenges with Pargo on SJ. She informed us she had had no contacts in Lombok Strait.

0230 Started through the Strait at 4 engine speed.

0400 Completed transit of Lombok Strait and set course for Fremantle.

0721 Dived for trim.

0838 Surfaced.

January 25

Enroute Fremantle.

January 26

0000 Picked up radar interference bearing 175° T on SJ.

0400 Picked up SJ radar interference bearing 295° T. The interference bearing 175° T was on continuously and the interference at 295° T was on intermittently until after daylight. The source of these interferences seemed to be on the same course and speed as we were since the true bearing did not change appreciably during a six hour period. Both sources had a 210 mc contact on APR for a few minutes. At sunrise speeded up to fifteen knots to overtake source of radar. At

1200 Since we had no interference on southbound subs near us and no information on subs using 210 mc radar, sent dispatch to CTG Seventy One reporting interference.

1800 Received dispatch from CTG Seventy One stating that the only subs near us were Guavina and Pampanito at Exmouth and that 210 mc interference probably came from Northwest Cape. Apparently we were experiencing freak atmospheric conditions for we picked up the SJ of those two boats over 230 miles away and the interference from the Northwest Cape was over 200 miles. The C.O. had a similar experience when the Chanticlear was tracked out with a saturation pip to over 40 miles with the old low power SJ radar.

1348 Dived for trim.

1400 Surfaced.

January 27-28

Enroute Fremantle. Exchanged calls with Bashaw, tracked out to 38,000 yards.

January 29

Arrived Fremantle. Conducted underway sound and degaussing tests.

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(C) WEATHER

The weather in the South China Sea area followed very closely the weather predicted by the China Seas and Philippine Pilots. Very strong monsoon weather made periscope depth patrolling impossible for about four days and very difficult throughout the patrol. Several days we had to make 60 rpm to maintain depth. Wind and seas were from 050° T 95% of the time in the area. No unusual weather conditions were encountered.

(D) TIDAL INFORMATION

In the middle of the South China Seas, the set is generally westerly at .5 to .8 knots.

The currents along the East Coast of Hainan have a southerly to southwesterly set from .5 to .9 knots. No unusual currents were encountered.

(E) NAVIGATIONAL AIDS

No navigational aids were sighted. Balintang Island is an excellent radar target for transitting Balintang Channel.

Tinhosa Island (height 1083 feet) is excellent for fixing ship's position off the southeastern Hainan coast. It is usually picked up on SJ at 60,000 yds. Other good radar targets along the Hainan are False Tinhosa Island, Lak-Lin (2040 feet), Mount Toncon and the Taya Islands.